PERCEPTION

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CANADIAN COUNCIL ON SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

Rising tides: Making progress on poverty in Atlantic Canada

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Perception is published by the Canadian Council on Social Development, an independent voluntary organization.

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Cover photographs: The Hopewell Rocks, Communications New Brunswick.
Inset, top: Mahone Bay, South Shore, Nova Scotia.com.
Inset, middle: The Narrows, St. John's Harbour, Newfoundland and Labrador.
Inset, bottom: Rural landscape of Dunedin on Prince Edward Island.

Editorial

By Peggy Taillon

It is with great pleasure that I write my first editorial for *Perception* as President of the Canadian Council on Social Development. I am humbled to be part of an organization with such a rich heritage, and one that has fulfilled such an important role in Canada for almost 90 years.

Having worked in the health field for many years – and for the principles of social justice throughout my life – the strong connections among social issues and the links between social and human rights and responsibilities have become increasingly clear. In many ways, coming to the CCSD feels like I have returned to my roots and strengthened my passion for social justice.

> **It would be easy to buy into the message that it's time to hunker down, ask for less, and expect less. But the evidence is clear: economic prosperity and social development are inextricably connected.**

I've have been thinking a lot recently about what it means to be Canadian. Perhaps that's because I've become a mother to my beautiful son Devlin, following a long and arduous 14-month fight to bring him to Canada from Kenya. Over that time, I watched the people in Kenya struggle but persevere, living with hope and resilience and a sense of community that I have yet to see elsewhere in the world. When I tell curious friends in Kenya about life in Canada, I am invariably proud and almost idealistic. I speak fondly of Canada's beauty, its cleanliness, its safety, and I speak about our universal health care system and our social safety net.

I don't mention the many complexities of our health and social systems, nor the barriers and silos that are counter intuitive – and counter productive – to the healthy functioning of those systems. I remain silent about the fears and preoccupations of many Canadian families who worry about where their children's next meal will come from, or how they will pay for medications. Or why, despite every effort, employment opportunities don't materialize, and people are unable to provide for their families or contribute to their communities with dignity. I avoid explaining why after years of hard work, too many Canadians are retiring into poverty, that universal health care is a myth, and that challenges and cut-backs to our social safety net have created large gaps in our nation's fabric.

> **Together we can prosper, but alone, we will surely fail.**

When talking to others about Canada, I tend to ignore those realities because they are as difficult to explain as they are to fathom. But it's true: in a country as extraordinary and as generously endowed as Canada, poverty not only persists, it is growing deeper. So instead I say that for most people, Canada *is* a land of opportunity, a place where one can safely explore new challenges and enjoy the freedom to make personal decisions without threat of persecution. It is a place where a social safety net exists to help you when you need it.

That is true for most people in Canada. But not for all.

While Canada does has a social safety net, those who have had the misfortune of trying to navigate it know only too well that the system can feel like a maze, fraught with many traps that seem designed to keep them from prospering and getting to the other side.

Many Canadians today are also experiencing the impact of financial and environmental systems that have failed to recognize their limitations

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– and their responsibilities – and we are all now paying the price. In the din of daily media reports, it would be easy to buy into the message that it's time to hunker down, ask for less, and expect less.

Yet the evidence is clear: economic prosperity and social development are inextricably connected. Without social development, economic development creates a recession of another kind – a social recession that is far harder to overcome because it compounds economic hardships, delays prosperity, and ultimately tears apart communities.

It's time to seize the collective will, expertise and leadership in all sectors of Canada.

Instead, this is the time for a renewed dialogue. We need to build on the tried and true, learn from the tested and failed, and as importantly, be open to new ways of working together to test the untested. This is precisely the time we need to come together and speak about a shared vision. Drawing on the values I embrace from Kenya, I think what's required here is a collective response, a call to action to uphold our moral obligations to our community. Together, we can prosper, but alone, we will surely fail. Government intervention alone won't do it; without a fundamental change in our individualistic approaches to life, we will continue down the path to failure.

Kenyans inherently share what little they have with their community. A woman who has had a good yield from her crops will share it with the village, knowing that others will do the same for her family. In Kenyan villages, elders and the most vulnerable are revered, and communities provide circles of support for those most in need.

Just imagine what we could do here in Canada if we were all willing to walk across the street a few times a week to check on ageing neighbours, and share food with them during the cold winter when soaring energy costs prevent them from making regular trips to the market. Imagine what we could do if we all looked at our individual success as something that must be shared in order to have real value. Imagine that.

I think the inaugural Canadian Social Forum that the CCSD is organizing for May 2009 is an ideal opportunity to come together as Canadians, to challenge ourselves to do better, to consider unconventional approaches, and to take new ideas forward. We envision the Forum as a watershed, a moment we can look back on and see how our collective wisdom and experiences, paired with a visionary call to action, created a shift in Canada's social landscape.

It's time to seize the collective will, expertise and leadership in all sectors of Canada to create that seminal moment. I look forward to working with all of you and learning together as we do so.

So let's get going.

Peggy Taillon is President of the Canadian Council on Social Development.

Thanks, Marcel

I want to say a special thank you to my predecessor at the CCSD, Marcel Lauzière. My transition into the Council has been much easier, thanks to the solid foundation he established here. I am also grateful to have his continued collaboration and friendship as we move forward, and I know the CCSD Board and staff share my appreciation for his tremendous leadership and commitment to the organization.

Mapping Poverty-reduction Initiatives

By Pat Steenberg

There was a remarkable gathering in Ottawa last month.

It wasn't the usual collection of politicians, or bureaucrats, or academics, and the day-long discussions were focussed, practical and to the point.

And although the subject under discussion was poverty across Canada, the participants were remarkably upbeat and showed steely-eyed determination that something can – and will – be done to reduce poverty.

The "mini-summit" was hosted jointly by the Canadian Council on Social Development, the Atkinson Charitable Foundation, and Human Resources and Social Development Canada. It brought together 23 representatives of poverty-reduction coalitions and networks working at the provincial and regional levels, and 10 representatives of national anti-poverty groups or coalitions in a "structured brainstorming process."

Each representative provided a short summary of their work – the group's mission and mandate, their membership, principal activities, and the kinds of challenges they face.

From that information, the CCSD will compile a preliminary "inventory" of the poverty-reduction work going on across the country. Each of the participating organizations will then be asked to encourage other groups and networks in their regions to add their own initiatives to the inventory. The hope is to compile a comprehensive map of poverty-reduction initiatives in Canada in time for the Canadian Social Forum in Calgary next May (see article on page 14).

Remarkable Consensus

In order to hear from so many different participants, presenters were given a strict 5-minute time allotment to address the following questions:

1. What kind of organization/coalition/network are you and who are members of your group?
2. What is the most important thing your coalition/organization/group wants to achieve overall? In the next 6 months? In the next 3 years?
3. What are your top 3 challenges?
4. Have you set outcome measures for your work? If so, what are they?

As each person sketched out the kinds of poverty-reduction work their coalition or network was doing, one became aware not only of the diversity of approaches used in different areas across the country and the particular challenges that arise as a result of geography or different client bases, but also of the many significant commonalities, objectives and activities.

Later in the day, participants worked together in small groups. Each table addressed the same question:

- In your view, what are the three most important things that a) your provincial government; b) the federal government; and c) other sectors, particularly the corporate sector, can do to achieve serious poverty reduction in general and support your poverty-reduction work in particular?

As rapporteurs from each table consolidated the information from their discussions, there was again remarkable consensus about participants' expectations for what the different levels of government and other sectors could – and should – be doing to help build and sustain momentum for poverty reduction.

A final plenary discussion addressed the question of whether participants were interested in working collectively together in the future and, if so, what would that work be? What resources would be required? And what would each coalition or group be willing to contribute to that collective effort over the next six to 12 months?

There was enthusiastic support for the creation of a national "virtual network" to share ideas, knowledge, experience and expertise around poverty reduction in Canada. Participants saw this gathering as a first step in that process, and they encouraged the CCSD to continue to foster the network by helping this group stay connected. Other participants volunteered to take the lead in other areas identified, such as drafting language and ideas for a common declaration on the need for a poverty-reduction strategy. ❧

Pat Steenberg manages the Community Social Data Strategy at the CCSD as Vice President of Strategic Partnerships and Alliances.

Rising Tides: Anti-poverty Work Growing in Atlantic Canada

By David Jackson

Marjorie Willison has been working and volunteering for the last 26 years to make Spryfield a better community.

The mostly working-class and low-income area is often seen as the troubled sibling among Halifax neighbourhoods. In the past, the name Spryfield was in so many media crime stories that some residents said they lived in Mainland South to escape the negative connotation.

But Ms. Willison, who bought a house in Spryfield in 1979 when she and her husband were getting ready to have a family, loves it here.

Her work now is with the Chebucto Communities Development Association. A recent federal study found that children in Spryfield aren't as ready for school as they should be in areas like communication skills, readiness for physical activities, and how to get along with others. She is part of a broad cross-section of the community – from church groups to school principals to mental health workers – looking for answers on how to reverse those findings.

"If kids aren't ready for school, they aren't going to succeed, and if they don't finish high school, well it's likely straight down the road to poverty," Ms. Willison says. "So it's getting at the root causes – why do people end up in poverty and what help do they need to get out of it?"

To that end, Ms. Willison says her group is also trying to build esteem and instil a sense of community. "Being able to finish school, feeling like they belong and have a role to play in their community is important. So another thing we do is try to encourage people to help their neighbours and get involved in volunteer work to strengthen the social fabric," she says.

It's just that type of work that the Metro United Way has decided to focus on, and it's a change from past practice of simply funding agencies.

Peter Mortimer, the senior director of community resources for the United Way, says a trend that emerged in the 2001 census changed their approach. Census data indicated that people with various "distress factors" – from low income to lower levels of education – were becoming concentrated in certain neighbourhoods. Mr. Mortimer says the trend was obvious in bigger Canadian cities 20 years ago, although it may also have been happening in Nova Scotia, but wasn't recognized until more recently.

Mr. Mortimer says there are several implications from this trend: it's easier for people who are not in those communities to ignore the issue, and it creates a divide, a we-versus-they scenario.

Now the United Way is focusing on two neighbourhoods – Spryfield and Dartmouth North. "Our work there is based on the local approach, which is trying to get residents actually engaged in their community," Mr. Mortimer says. "Our work is designed to increase social capital in particular neighbourhoods, so we start influencing that neighbourhood and over time, indicators start improving."

Mr. Mortimer is one of dozens involved in anti-poverty work throughout Nova Scotia who are hoping the province's poverty reduction strategy, which should be released by the end of the year, will support and build on the work that his organization and others are doing.

It will make Nova Scotia the second Atlantic province with a poverty reduction strategy. Newfoundland and Labrador implemented its strategy in 2006, while New Brunswick launched public consultations in October that are to result in a strategy by the fall of 2009.

The Atlantic region is ahead of the curve nationally, with Quebec being the only other province with a poverty reduction strategy in place. Ontario is working on one. The Atlantic provinces also have lower rates of the population living below the low income cut-off compared to the national rate. According to Statistics Canada, 10.5% of the population in Canada lived below the after-tax LICO in 2006, while the figure was 9.2% in New Brunswick, 8.4% in Nova Scotia, 7.6% in Newfoundland and Labrador, and 5.4% in Prince Edward Island.

For the scores of people in the Atlantic working to try to whittle down those rates, years of frustration

are giving way to cautious optimism that their respective provincial governments will continue and build on their poverty reduction measures.

Anti-poverty advocates in New Brunswick were buoyed by the hiring of James Hughes to the post of deputy minister of the Department of Family and Community Services. With his background as the former director of the Old Brewery Mission in Montreal, Quebec's largest shelter, they know he "gets it."

"I think there's enormous commitment on the part of the province to do something about poverty reduction," says Randy Hatfield, executive director of the Human Development Council in Saint John. "I think the business community here has been softened up for a decade. The statistics are stark and speak for themselves."

Saint John, which has concentrations of poverty in some areas similar to what Mr. Mortimer found in Halifax, is home to the most active anti-poverty business group in the region – the Business Community Anti-Poverty Initiative, or BCAPI. It started 11 years ago, borne out of the city's self-reliant attitude. Tom Gribbons, a BCAPI board member and chairman of the city's Vibrant Communities leadership roundtable, says the business community realized that if the area was to grow, they couldn't leave 26% of the population behind.

But those business leaders faced a steep learning curve. Mr. Gribbons says they initially thought the fix was fairly simple – maybe hold a couple of job fairs and get people working. They soon learned about the array of problems – a lack of child care, public transportation, education, and others – that stood in the way.

A study completed in 2000 helped the group decide to focus its efforts on single-parent families and teenagers – both those who were pregnant, and helping to prevent teen pregnancies. It started the PALS (Partners Assisting Local Schools) program, which provides academic and life skills support to children living in poverty. The program has now grown to cover 10 schools, and many more are interested.

Mr. Gribbons says another success story is First Steps, a service for young homeless pregnant or parenting women. It includes a residence, an alternative school, and day care which allow the women to complete their high school education.

Along the way, BCAPI – whose voice includes billionaire industrialist James K. Irving – has joined with social justice advocates in the call for a poverty reduction strategy for the province. Mr. Gribbons said there was some initial distrust of the business group's motives, and the more cynical in the anti-poverty movement claim the private sector is self-serving in pressuring government for a strategy, merely looking for new workers.

Years of frustration are giving way to cautious optimism that provincial governments will continue and build on poverty reduction measures.

Mr. Gribbons, a branch manager of RBC Dominion Securities, doesn't shy away from that assessment. He says it makes sense not only ethically and morally to reduce poverty, but also economically. "Yes, we're business people. Yes, it's self-serving. But that's how the system works. That's how the world works," he says. "It makes sense for everybody to reduce poverty, not just the people who live in poverty. It makes sense for business, it makes sense for the middle class in this country, it makes sense for everyone."

While New Brunswick is just embarking on its consultation towards a poverty reduction strategy, Newfoundland and Labrador is on its first round of biennial consultations to see how its strategy is working so far.

When the Newfoundland and Labrador government introduced its strategy in 2006, it identified the goal of reducing the provincial poverty rate from one of the highest in Canada to the lowest rate within 10 years. The government lists 60 poverty reduction initiatives that have been put in place over the last two years. Highlights include expanding prescription drug coverage to low-income families and individuals, indexing income support rates, and extending the board and lodging benefit to include disabled adults living with family.

Penelope Rowe, CEO of the Community Services Council of Newfoundland and Labrador, says the strategy is definitely having an impact. There's support for the local work of organizations such as the Council's outreach to St. John's neighbourhoods where people are struggling, despite the prosperity around them.

The strategy also funded training in a program called Makin' It Work, a Vibrant Communities

initiative that connects people on income support with a hotel owner. To date, half a dozen people have been hired.

But the strategy has done more than just enhance, create, and support programs, Ms. Rowe says. It has also improved how government works. "There are linkages now being made across government departments in a way that was not happening before, or not to the extent it is now," she says.

This breaking down of so-called silos in government has also happened in Nova Scotia, says Lynn Hartwell, executive director of policy and information management in the Community Services department. The 2006 Nunn inquiry into a woman's death as a result of a car crash by an out-of-control teen pointed to the need for better coordination of services across government departments. It led to a child and youth strategy, and was a catalyst for changing how government thinks about social services, Ms. Hartwell says.

The province also released its social prosperity framework last year, called Weaving the Threads: A Lasting Social Fabric, and it is now having deputy ministers meet regularly on the issue. Next up is the poverty reduction strategy, which will build on current provincial programs like prescription drug coverage for children in low-income families, subsidized child care, income assistance, and employment supports.

Nova Scotia activists awaiting the strategy are anxious to see whether the government will actually act on it and commit multi-year funding, as Newfoundland and Labrador has done. Paul O'Hara, a social worker in Halifax who has dealt with poverty issues for 30 years, worries that the move toward strategies is "trendy, and just words."

Mr. Mortimer says government can't just pick a couple of priority items. "The argument goes: you can't do everything at once, so you've got to focus. I think that's a loop," he says. "You move 10 people out of poverty because you're focusing on these two priorities. But 10 more people move into poverty because you're not focusing on the other priorities. I understand the argument, I just don't think it helps us move out of poverty. I think it does need to be comprehensive."

Advocates in Prince Edward Island are trying to get the province back on track after last year's talk of a provincial poverty reduction strategy seems to have stalled. "It's as though they wish they hadn't said it," says Marie Burge, a member of the Working Group for a Liveable Income. "I don't know if that's fair to them or not, but we're looking for some kind of confirmation that they're onto it."

PEI Social Services and Seniors Minister Doug Currie has been a vocal supporter of a national poverty strategy. Bob Creed, that department's director of social programs, says PEI doesn't have the wealth of Newfoundland and Labrador, and the "fiscal realities do place a strain on our abilities to respond." He says the province has been looking at the numbers, trying to get a true picture of poverty in the province, but there are already programs across government to combat it. Besides the expected income and housing supports, he notes that policies like not charging provincial sales tax on heating oil or electricity, and covering dental care for children under 18 benefit people with low incomes.

Mr. Creed says even in his small province, transportation is a challenge for people in rural areas where public transit is almost non-existent. It's an issue all Atlantic provinces have in common.

Ms. Rowe says people in rural areas of her province may have a chance to fish a bit, or grow a few vegetables, or own a home, and they often have some kind of family support or support network.

Arnold Bennett, a director of the multi-faith Religious Social Action Coalition in St. John's, says that's a big difference between people experiencing poverty in rural and urban areas, and it's something that's become more stark since the early 1990s with the downturn in the fishery. "In rural Newfoundland, if somebody needed a place to live, everybody in town would get together and build them a shack – a house. I've lived in houses here that were hand-built, and they're sort of funny. The walls don't quite meet, and things like that, but you don't have homeless in rural Newfoundland," says Mr. Bennett, who insists on poverty elimination, not just reduction.

"With out-migration from rural Newfoundland and some in-migration to St. John's, now there are a lot of people with no social networks, so there are actually homeless people. New problems of poverty have to do with housing and transportation that are a reflection of the shift from a strong rural social network to a much weaker urban social network."

Stan Oliver, executive director of the Labrador Friendship Centre, is trying to provide that kind of support to Aboriginals who come from tiny communities scattered across Labrador's 296,000

The Atlantic provinces have set goals for their futures, or at least have a sense of optimism beyond the current economic turmoil.

square kilometres to the "urban" setting of Goose Bay. "We've got a community of 10,000 people here, Burger Kings, and what not. When you compare that to a place like Postville, where there are 260 people who primarily speak Inuktitut, we're pretty urban when they come here, right?" explains Mr. Oliver.

The centre's mandate, like those of 117 other Friendship Centres across the country, is to provide programs and services to Aboriginals moving to towns and cities. Mr. Oliver, a full-blooded Inuk, says the problems in some clients' histories are so complex they almost defy comprehension.

"They have addictions problems, they have life skills problems. Some come from violent situations. There is solvent abuse, and some have very poor parenting skills because they were never taught those skills because their parents were brought up through the residential school system. So there are a lot of complex issues on the coast of Labrador, and the people come here, so that's the biggest challenge," he says.

Their biggest need is for support – everything from psychological counselling to simply having someone remind them to pay their rent when they get their welfare cheque, or take them to their appointment with the addictions counsellor.

"There's lots of support with government agencies, but listen, if you can't speak English, or you're a young person and you're intimidated by the whole bureaucratic process, do you think you're going to go? You're not, right? They need a lot of support," says Mr. Oliver. He says the province's poverty reduction strategy is moving in the right direction, although it's a slow process. Just a few weeks ago, the centre received $80,000 in provincial funding for an employment program that will help six people upgrade their skills and get 26 weeks work.

Efforts to combat poverty in the Atlantic region are coming at a time when those provinces have set goals for their futures, or at least have a sense of optimism beyond the current economic turmoil.

Newfoundland and Labrador became a "have" province this year, but not everything about its resource wealth and development is positive. Mr. Oliver says the gap between "the haves and have-nots" is growing, and must be addressed. Ms. Rowe says she's aware of one Labrador town where the fast food places close just after supper because they can't find people to work for $13 an hour, a story right out of Fort McMurray. And in St. John's, she says development has led to a tight commercial rental market, as landlords eye deep-pocketed oil companies.

Mr. Creed says employment participation levels are at a record high in Prince Edward Island, although the Working Group for a Liveable Income says that's misleading with the low wages of many Island workers. Nova Scotia plans to be one of the most sustainable places in the world by 2020, with the province's social prosperity as a vital link in that goal.

And in New Brunswick, the goal is self-sufficiency by 2026. A wide-ranging 2007 report on the non-profit sector in the province included consultations with more than 1,000 people. It found the sector was 'hanging by a thread' and its recommendations included a poverty reduction strategy. Meanwhile, the southern part of the province is looking at huge projects over the next few years, including another oil refinery and nuclear power plant, and a liquefied natural gas terminal and potash mine.

Mr. Hatfield says that kind of activity gets people thinking about the bigger picture, as it would in the other provinces. "I think there's some sense of optimism when you look at the local economy. And when you get optimistic, you tend to survey the landscape and then you think, whoa, look at the bottom!"

The current worldwide economic uncertainty may have dampened the optimism of some in the Atlantic region – those at risk of poverty worry that they just may "slip to the bottom," while those already living in poverty resign themselves to staying there. But citizens in the Atlantic provinces – both those working in their communities and in government – seem determined to fill the gaps necessary to lift and support their poor citizens, though the question remains how long that will take.

David Jackson is a journalist with The Chronicle-Herald *in Halifax. He can be reached at* djackson@herald.ca

An Interview: with JAMES HUGHES, New Brunswick's Deputy Minister of Social Development

By Patrick Flanagan

James Hughes

When asked, the receptionist hesitantly admits they call him Jim, rather than James. As the former Director of the Old Brewery Mission for homeless people in Montreal, I half expect Jim Hughes to have a somewhat shop-worn appearance that (in my experience with such facilities in Canada) comes with that territory. I show up a few minutes early for the twice-postponed interview, only to find that he has been called to a Cabinet Committee meeting. He asks that I join him in the anteroom where he is awaiting his call to answer questions about the Department's new "Poverty Reduction Plan."

He answered my knock on the Executive Council office door. Instead of an 'I've-seen-it-all-before' old-timer, Mr. Hughes might well be mistaken for a stock market trader, or an up-and-coming Director in a government office. I spent the better part of an hour in conversation with this youngish, energized, eager and engaging Deputy Minister in the Department of Social Development, the third-largest government department in New Brunswick.

***Q**: How did you get here?*

A: "No question, it is not a traditional route to a Deputy Minister position. And the jump from the voluntary sector comes with risks – you don't know the culture and environment, maybe a longer learning curve to get going. But after being in the job for six months, I find myself in an exciting, dynamic corporate culture, one that has welcomed me. There is a real positive synergy between the outside perspective I bring and the inside knowledge of the system."

"The leadership role I played at the Old Brewery Mission with a very focused mandate is remarkably similar to the leadership required in this kind of position – albeit with a much broader view and mandate. The structure is not so different from when I was working with a Board *[remember, this interview was being conducted outside the Cabinet meeting room, his new 'board']*, and the intentions and goals are largely the same. I was surprised and delighted on how focused my Department is on the relief of poverty and support of the vulnerable. I'm *chez moi* here."

"There are obvious differences when you layer on the political requirements of the day, media pressures, the advocacy groups, the business sector – all those other factors that come into play in policy development."

***Q**: I want to know what his time and considerable success working in Quebec with homeless people, or with at-risk youth, have brought to his work here in New Brunswick.*

A: "A new vocabulary and a new perspective. It is fundamentally different how we in community-based initiatives see the world, because of the different pressures the government feels, the ones I just mentioned. I believe the language of community development, including the accompaniment of people to a better place – at their side, as their guide, with the person making their own decisions – respecting that role is important from the community perspective. We (the community) have our arc on the circle. Government has an even larger piece of the circle. Government's role is to make sure there is no break in the circle."

"The other part I may bring – not to say that it was not in the government before – is the hope of a truly better province and country. We go out to community with aspirations to leave deep tracks where we have had the privilege to serve – capacity building, a firm focus. I feel there truly is a chance to leave deep tracks with the Poverty Reduction Plan process we launched last week." **(www.gnb.ca/poverty)**

***Q**: At this point, I felt I had held him back long enough. I asked if he would care to elaborate on his Department's new plan to reduce poverty, keeping in mind the reality that many governments have travelled this path before, with moderate success in most cases.*

A: "Our department is very excited about the eventual plan that has been adopted. It's not only about money, it's about wellness, and education too. It's inter-sectoral; it's societal. We are inspired by what other provinces have been

able to do. We are developing a poverty reduction plan tailored to New Brunswick. It will consider the inter-relationships between government, community and private sector initiatives. We want to have a process to get to that end."

"As such, the process is co-owned by government, and by the non-profit and business sectors. The process has three co-chairs, one from each sector. We will move throughout the province to find the 'genius on the ground' – causes and solutions for poverty, ways to track and measure our gains, identifying who is to be accountable to make it better."

Q:*But what will make this effort different from other attempts to tackle poverty?*

A:"The basis of our plan is public engagement, not public consultation. We are not looking for 100 recommendations for government. Rather, we are seeking a plan of action, where government has part of the role. It is an exciting engagement initiative, where we clasp hands with other partners. No one is underestimating the difficulty…but it must be done."

"The initiative is spread over 12 months, and seeks to engage citizens in an effort to set a global objective for New Brunswick, identify priority actions, determine indicators, and establish accountability – who will report, who will keep this moving, who will get it done. For example, Newfoundland established a cabinet committee to oversee their poverty reduction initiative. I'm not sure what we will end up with as far as government's role goes."

"Our first Phase will engage with community, visiting all regions of the province. In our second Phase, 15 individuals who are well versed in poverty reduction will be asked to translate the 'on-the-ground genius' into options. This 15-member group will comprise expertise from inside and outside the province. Then, in the third Phase, we will conduct a Roundtable of 30 to 40 people, selected by the Premier, to debate and define proposed actions, identify indicators of success, and costs."

"Then a Final Forum in November will seek broader consensus on the plan, and determine monitoring mechanisms."

Q:*I asked what makes him hopeful that this will succeed.*

A:"Poverty rates have come down, particularly with seniors, largely due to federal initiatives. And good employment numbers have helped. But we still have tenacious poverty levels that have to be taken on. Our child poverty rates are in the high teens. Such persistent poverty rates are very troubling. We need to sift through all the ideas we receive to find a way forward."

"We have deliberately created a process that leads to action, not recommendations. This process creates a new space for getting the tough business of consensus-building done – a safe space in which to imagine a new way of working in the province. My volunteer work with the National Council of Welfare was a fantastic experience looking at such initiatives across Canada. It is important for New Brunswick as a small and diverse province to use such a process. Through this process, I want to give our department the focal point for our work."

"The business community role is also very important. This is their chance to come to the table. It makes this effort different. We have some very engaged business leaders in New Brunswick, such as the Business Community Anti-Poverty Initiative in Saint John. We need business on-board, as it is in their interest as well."

"The fact that this is aligned with the government's self-sufficiency thrust is also promising."

"I've seen it happen at the Old Brewery Mission – how the excitement of coming together, of focusing objectives, can move people to greater heights. We want to create an electricity of hope that things can be better."

Q:*I closed by asking him how CCSD's current work might be used in his new plan.*

A:"We are closely watching CCSD's initiatives such as their Community Social Data project and the Canadian Social Forum in Calgary in May 2009. By the time the Forum comes around, we will be almost halfway through our process. We will be very interested to participate in the Forum. I'll be there with my team!"

James Hughes is the Deputy Minister of Social Development in New Brunswick.
He was interviewed for Perception *by Patrick Flanagan, Vice-President and CEO of the Learning Bar Inc.* (**www.thelearningbar.com/**). *Patrick is the former Youth Advocate for the Department of Public Safety in New Brunswick, and past Chair of the Board of the Canadian Council on Social Development.*

Atlantic Summer Institute: Making the links

Every summer for the past five years, Atlantic Canadians committed to healthy and safe communities have an opportunity to get together at the University of Prince Edward Island. They represent a cross-section of frontline workers, policy makers, people working in social development, justice, disease and injury prevention, and education – all interested in pushing down the proverbial "silos."

"From the beginning, the Institute has made the links between crime prevention, social and economic development, and health," says co-ordinator, Patsy Beattie-Huggan. "Many of us intuitively know there are links. But in our everyday work it's sometimes hard to take that step back and collaborate."

The Summer Institute focuses on building connections among different sectors and among the Francophone, Anglophone and Aboriginal communities in Atlantic Canada.

Pictured from left to right: John Scoville, Imelda Perley, Rosella Melanson, Dianne Smith, Dorothy Ahlgren-Franklin, Robert Seymour Wright, Linda Shohet, and moderator, Gail Dugas.

"There are so many of us committed to creating a good quality of life for Atlantic Canada," says Jill Lightwood, who works in the PEI Attorney General's office and has been attending the Institute since it was created. "The challenge is to break down some of the walls and find ways we can talk to each other about it."

Getting Literacy on the Public Agenda

Robert Seymour Wright is Executive Director of the Child and Youth Strategy for the Government of Nova Scotia. He was one of seven commentators during the Atlantic Summer Institute's "Policy in the Round" session. The question put to panellists and conference participants was: "What is the next step in getting literacy on the public agenda?" Here is an excerpt from his contribution to that conversation.

"One of the things we need to do is to recognize that there is a problem.

When you inherit the Westminster system of government that has a prime minister, a premier, and people in charge of departments, it presumes that all the issues the government needs to deal with are neatly tied up in a departmental bundle. And issues like literacy – which is something that occurs on a continuum – and issues like homelessness, which is also something that occurs on a continuum, these are complex social problems.

Increasingly we are recognizing that in order to address the complexity of these social problems, we need to have this kind of collaborative, cross-departmental effort, engaging community stakeholders and engaging communities on all kinds of levels and with different models of working together. So we need to start to think about how we do that in a way that is consistent with the way we currently govern, and we need to think about how we change the way we govern so that it's more consistent with the way people's problems need to be addressed.

One of the things I think is very important is for us to have certain things in mind, like understanding the determinants of health, and understanding community development as a model for addressing complex social issues. Because if we keep reducing these problems to simplistic understandings, we're never going to mobilize in an effective way or make any headway.

How do we make people care? How do we translate what we know to be necessary into the social policies and programs that are necessary to deliver? I think we need to have an analysis around that. We have to think about that. Most of the social programs that have been developed in this country – and I think you'll find it in most of the western world and certainly in this continent – were delivered when a critical mass of the population needed that service. We did not implement health and human services for people who were

This year, the CCSD supported the Summer Institute by moderating its "Policy in the Round" session on literacy.

With seven opinionated community commentators on stage and a wealth of experience in the audience, it was a chance for participants to talk about ideas and strategies for getting literacy on the radar screen.

"Literacy has been underestimated as a tool in the fight against poverty," says CCSD Vice-President, Gail Dugas. "There is lots of hard work going on in local communities and some good initiatives. But energy gets dissipated when organizations and individuals don't readily see where their work fits into the big picture. That's got to change."

The Atlantic Summer Institute combines curriculum-based workshops for practitioners with sessions designed to bridge the gaps between health promotion, crime prevention and social development.

"You can learn about best practices and enhance your own skills – for instance, in evidence-based research," says Lightwood. "There are great tools being developed in Atlantic Canada and some really inspiring initiatives, so we try to highlight those."

Lightwood, who has spent her entire career in social development, says she also looks to the Institute for inspiration. "It's about solutions, ideas, contacts," she says. "It creates a new energy. We often hear that from participants. And it makes it a whole lot easier to connect with another sector when you can put a face to a name, and you've spent time sharing a coffee with them on a bright summer PEI morning."

The Atlantic Summer Institute on Healthy and Safe Communities is sponsored by the Atlantic Centre of Excellence for Women's Health, and co-hosted by the Centre for Life-Long Learning at the University of Prince Edward Island and the PEI Health Research Institute. For the past three years, the Government of Canada's National Crime Prevention Strategy has been a major funder of the Institute.

Want to know more??

The Atlantic Summer Institute web page is **http://www.upei.ca/si/splashpage**.

The CCSD's series of reports on Literacy in the Workplace can be found at **www.ccsd.ca/pubs/2007/literacy/**.

disadvantaged because it was the right thing to do. We did it because, 'Gosh darn it; it's starting to affect me.'

So when we recognize that literacy is an issue, when it becomes a true national issue, then we'll begin to do something about it. It goes back to the earlier question about, 'how come literacy is a problem at a time when we have more people graduating from high school and more people going on to university than ever before?' I think it's because our race to achieve an education is being outmatched by the increasing demand or need for an education in order to get by in society. We need to have that analysis.

We're only a generation and a half away from having basically a resource economy here. So the young person who didn't want to be involved in school could go work the woods with Uncle Charlie instead, or go fish the seas with Uncle Fred. And they could have a piece of land and be building a home by the time they were 23. Everything seemed fine and dandy; it wasn't a social problem.

The problem is, you can't do that anymore. We've taken all the fish out of the ocean, and farming is no longer something that can be done economically or sustainably. So we need to have an analysis that recognizes why literacy is a challenge, and we need to start to promote the fact that it's going to be an even bigger problem, an even bigger challenge in the future.

When I talk about anti-poverty initiatives, I tell people: "We'll all be concerned about poverty once we recognize that *we* are the poor." It affects me; it affects my children. The jobs that are necessary, the jobs that are coming on the horizon, are not going to be filled by people who have a Grade 12 education. They're going to be filled by people who have a more specialized education.

And if we look at the economy, we recognize that an increasing percentage of the workforce is going to be filled by more recent immigrants to Canada. So languages, culture, these kinds of literacy are going to become increasingly more important as we move forward. If we think about that, then we will begin to recognize that having a national literacy strategy and having significant provincial resources dedicated to improving the print, language and cultural literacy of our current workforce and of our children and young people is going to be absolutely essential. Not for us to progress as a society, but just to keep pace as a society. When we get that analysis, then we'll start to mobilize."

Building Momentum for Real Change:
CANADIAN SOCIAL FORUM

A gathering in the downtown core of Canada's most prosperous city next May aims to galvanize poverty reduction in Canada.

The Canadian Council on Social Development is organizing the inaugural Canadian Social Forum, which will take place at the Telus Centre in Calgary, from May 19th to 22nd, 2009.

"It will be the place where social development meets up with public health, the environment, community safety, education and recreation – all working together to build momentum for real change," says Peggy Taillon, President of the CCSD. "Decision-makers, activists and academics will have the chance to move beyond their silos and work towards a common cause. We will debate, brainstorm and build the energy needed to take action on reducing poverty."

Despite Canada's relatively good economic performance over the last few years, poverty persists. And now with dire predictions for an economic downturn, conditions are expected to get even worse. Nowhere is that more evident than in Alberta. "This is an ideal backdrop to tackle these discussions and debates," says Marcel Lauzière, President of Imagine Canada and co-chair of the Social Forum Advisory Committee.

"People all across the country are telling us that the old ways of thinking haven't worked and that solutions to poverty go beyond anything that a single government, community or business can do on its own. At the same time, there are amazing initiatives, partnerships and ideas emerging."

The mandate of the Canadian Social Forum is to share that information with people from a wide variety of sectors, all working towards the same end. Building on the CCSD's decades of experience in bringing together individuals, communities and organizations, the Council is working with a national advisory committee and many partner organizations and sponsors to build momentum for real collaboration on poverty reduction.

Diversity

Presenters in plenary and workshop sessions will highlight promising practices, organizational obstacles and the realities of social and political issues. Some sessions will explore innovations in communities across the country; others will present more global ideas and approaches to stimulate debate and thoughtful discussion. The programme is designed to support the new wave of leaders who recognize that reducing poverty is essential to real prosperity – and leaders who are willing to step outside their usual comfort zone to help achieve that goal.

There has been an enthusiastic response to news about the Forum from community members and the voluntary sector, government, research, health, justice and business. "It is a diverse combination that has the potential to create some really good chemistry," says Sheila Regehr, Executive Director of the National Council of Welfare. "The timing is right."

"In effect, we're putting on the coffee and inviting people for three days of good talking and listening. Our mission is to kick-start the process. I expect we will be blown away by what comes out of this initiative," says Edgar MacLeod, a member of the Forum's National Advisory Committee and executive director of the Atlantic Police Academy in Prince Edward Island.

Capturing the Energy

Video will play an important part in the Forum. Video screens and cameras will be a prominent feature during the event. They'll be in the plenary room and in the lobby of the Telus Centre.

A mini video-production studio will also be located in the main lobby area. Over the three days, senior students from journalism schools will work with professional television producers and editors to capture the voices and faces of participants for broadcast throughout the Forum.

The studio will also provide participants with informal opportunities to learn how technology can empower their own story telling. And it will give young broadcast journalists the opportunity to meet people who are actively engaged in social issues in communities across the country. This initiative will help stimulate discussions about how journalism can be part of the community story – not just report on it.

A Speakers Corner will also be part of the studio set-up. There, individual participants can be interviewed and within hours, their comments will be broadcast on one of several screens. This gives voice to participants who might not otherwise get to a podium, and it helps capture ideas and messages, and identifies strong spokespeople from

around the country. It will also provide a wealth of video material for organizations to use within their own networks and share with colleagues and communities after the Forum.

The programme concludes with a bilingual Town Hall session moderated by Mark Kelley, a prominent CBC National journalist, that is designed to inspire participants in their next steps.

Planning Ahead

When the CCSD began planning the Forum, staff anticipated that some national organizations and networks might want to take the opportunity to meet together, in conjunction with their attendance at the Forum. So meeting rooms have been secured for the days before and after the event, and to date, at least 10 pre- and post-Forum meetings are in the works. "They have identified the Forum as a core activity in helping to inform and develop their own poverty reduction work. They want to take advantage of the energy that will be generated and the opportunities for collaboration with so many people coming together," says Nicole Boily, incoming Board Chair of the CCSD. "We are exploring how future Forums can become a hub for this kind of collaborative work."

The Canadian Social Forum will be a biennial event, with the next one scheduled for 2011.

The preliminary programme and early bird registration are available on the CCSD's website at **www.ccsd.ca/csf/2009**. Inquiries about the Forum should be sent to **forum@ccsd.ca**.

Plenary speakers
to date at the Canadian Social Forum include the following:

- **Cindy Blackstock**, Executive Director, First Nations Child and Family Caring Society of Canada;
- **Michael Crook**, coordinator of the Toronto Speakers Bureau, Voices from the Street;
- **Françoise David**, co-spokesperson for *Québec solidaire*, a new green, feminist and social justice political party in Quebec;
- **Tim Draimin**, Executive Director of Social Innovation Generation (SiG);
- **Dr. Roger Gibbins**, President and CEO of the Canada West Foundation;
- **Charles Karelis**, research professor at George Washington University;
- **Mark Kelley**, correspondent for CBC News: The National;
- **Ruth MacDonald**, Neighbourhood and Citizen Voice Engagement Facilitator for Vibrant Communities St. John's and board member of the National Anti-Poverty Organization;
- **Alain Noël**, professor of political science at the Université de Montréal;
- **Hugh Segal**, Canadian Senator;
- **Uzma Shakir**, community-based researcher and activist; Economic Justice Fellowship with the Atkinson Charitable Foundation;
- **Richard Shillington**, quantitative analysis of social issues, Infometrica Ltd.;
- **Shirley Soleil**, home-based business;
- **Michel Venne**, Executive Director and founder of the Institut du Nouveau Monde;
- **Cornelia Wieman**, Co-Director of the Indigenous Health Research Development Program and Assistant Professor, School of Public Health, University of Toronto.

National Advisory Committee, Canadian Social Forum

Wayne Helgason, Advisory Committee Co-Chair
Executive Director, Social Planning Council of Winnipeg
Board Chair of the CCSD

Marcel Lauzière, Advisory Committee Co-Chair
President, Imagine Canada

Nicole Boily, Consultant and Board Member of CCSD
Outgoing President, Conseil des Montréalaises

Michael Cushing, Consultant, Program Planning and Development, Toronto
Former CCSD Board Member

Sid Frankel, Faculty of Social Work, University of Manitoba
Board President, Boys and Girls Clubs of Canada, Winnipeg

Christa Freiler, Director of Research, Canadian Education Association, Toronto

Lisa Little, Acting Director, Public Policy, Canadian Nurses Association, Ottawa

Chief Edgar MacLeod, Executive Director, Atlantic Police Academy, PEI
Former President, Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police (CACP)

LaVerna McMaster, Chief Executive Officer
Siksika Resource Developments Ltd., Siksika, Alberta

Sheila Regehr, Executive Director, National Council of Welfare, Ottawa

Lionel Robert
Former Secretary General of the Conseil de la santé et au bien-être, Québec City
Board Member of the Institut du Nouveau Monde
CCSD Board Member

Dr. Gayla Rogers, Dean of Faculty of Social Work, University of Calgary

Dick Stewart, Consultant, Former General Manager for Social Services
City of Ottawa

Peggy Taillon, President, Canadian Council on Social Development, Ottawa

John te Linde, Manager, Policy and Planning, City of Calgary
CCSD Board Member

Lana Wells, Senior Director, Community Investments and Collaboration
United Way of Calgary and Area

Making Connections

Perception asked individuals who are very active and engaged in their communities about the importance of connecting across traditional boundaries.

Uzma Shakir,

a community-based researcher, advocate, and activist living in Toronto, and one of the plenary speakers at the Canadian Social Forum, responds:

The inaugural Canadian Social Forum next May in Calgary is described as "a process, rather than an event." Its mandate is to bring together people from a wide variety of sectors to share information about initiatives, partnerships and ideas to create real momentum for change on the poverty front.

➢ *Why do you think it is important to do so, and why now?*

The world is changing around us, as is Canada! But this change is not naturally progressive, nor indeed beneficial to all.

Here are some of the salient trends that ought to shape our public policy and advocacy work:

- Growing demographic shifts. In the Greater Toronto Area, close to 50% of the population is now non-Canadian born, immigrant/refugee, and ethno-racially diverse.
- Labour market changes. By 2011, almost 100% of net labour market replacement will be through immigration, but under-utilization of immigrant/refugee skills continues to cost our economy almost $4.7 billion in unrealized productivity.
- Income disparity. Between 1980 and 2000, the poverty rate among the white, Caucasian population in the GTA went down by 28%; for the racialized population, it went up by a staggering 361% – despite an economic boom time and immigrant/refugee education and skill levels that were higher than the Canadian average.
- Spatial divide. In the City of Toronto (which is the largest recipient of immigrants and refugees to Canada), poor racialized people are increasingly living in declining inner suburbs, while the historic middle-income belt is disappearing, and rich, non-racialized people congregate in the city core.

If we do not begin to acknowledge these emerging trends and concretely address them in our public policy and advocacy by adopting a racial equity outcome lens, we are in danger of compromising our fundamental liberal, multicultural and equity values, and our society will drift more and more towards racial, income and spatial inequality and segregation. Only by building a shared understanding of the issues and a commitment to collectively address those issues can we hope to build a country that we all have reason to value. The Canadian Social Forum is not only important to begin that process of building a shared political and social movement, it is absolutely necessary.

Globalization is unfolding in our backyard. The question is, is it going to be a force for justice and equity, or will it create new regimes of marginality?

People in the social development community – whether their work involves the delivery of services, or conducting research, or policy development – have been talking for many years about the need for action to reduce poverty in Canada, and particularly among certain groups that are disproportionately vulnerable.

➢ *How can these calls for action be broadened in order to engage other sectors in the work*

against poverty and encourage the general public to recognize the importance this issue?

I think the work must first be done within those communities that are willing to work on it, and most importantly, by those who are most affected by it. Community mobilizing and political action are extremely important. So far, there has been no concerted effort to work together among those who are aware of the issues. In fact, there is no consensus on what the various fault lines are, how they are created, and therefore how they should be addressed. For example, the link between race and poverty is still a tangential issue, even among some people in the anti-poverty movement. So first let's build a common or shared understanding of what we are fighting against and what solutions we are seeking.

I think the general public is able to understand that extreme divisions of inequality and income disparity are a problem in our society, but we need the public to understand that it is not someone else's problem. As economic times worsen, the racial, ethnic, linguistic, cultural and faith divides become more visible. We need to be extremely cautious not to feed those divides and we need to keep asserting that immigrant and refugee issues are not "their" problems but rather our collective problems. We also need to recognize and talk openly about the fact that while equality may be enshrined in society through our Charter of Rights and Freedoms, not everyone has equal access to those freedoms. Inequality is not someone's "fault" – the perennial "other" who is lazy and doesn't want to work, or doesn't share our values of equality, or wants to live in their ethnic ghetto. Inequality is the result of our social, economic and political structures which enable a handful of people to work less and get richer, the middle class to be steadily wiped out, and the number of working poor to grow. The fact that "colour" is an increasing part of this marginalization is particularly disturbing, and it is something that needs to be addressed collectively.

What are two things you hope will come out of the Forum process? And what impact do you think those discussions and deliberations will have on your own work going forward?

I hope that an analysis of race and status – immigration, refugee, Aboriginal – will become a critical and integral lens when dealing with any social justice issue and that we can reach a shared understanding of how to use it to move forward collectively. I also hope that we can begin to transform our disparate agendas into a "movement" for a new reality.

My own work is increasingly based on building new alliances and a broad-based movement for solidarity, so I hope my participation in the Forum will broaden my network of like-minded allies!

Attention Students: Do you know video?

The CCSD is looking for **senior students from broadcast, communications or social work disciplines** to be part of the Video Initiative at the Canadian Social Forum. Video will be an important tool to capture the ideas and energy at this event. And we're looking for a team of smart, creative student videographers, producers and editors to help us tell that story.

Over the four days, they'll have the opportunity to meet and interview people who are making a difference in communities across the country. And they'll work with professional broadcasters to capture the voices and faces of the Forum throughout the event.

There is also a **Video competition** – "Telling the poverty story." Two winning entries will be chosen for broadcast at the Forum and featured on the Forum website. Winners will receive a $500 cash prize, travel and accommodations while at the Canadian Social Forum, and an internship with the Forum's Video Initiative team.

Visit www.ccsd.ca/csf/2009/video for application forms and to find out more about the Canadian Social Forum Video Initiative.

Police Chiefs Speak Out Against Poverty

By Chief Edgar MacLeod

Canada's police leaders recently sounded the alarm over the growing poverty gap in our country.

This summer in Montreal, the Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police (CACP) unanimously passed a resolution urging all governments to develop and implement poverty reduction strategies.

When this news circulated, many long-standing social development advocates and supporters were thrilled with the prospect of adding another strong voice for government action on poverty. This was a timely boost to their efforts in tackling what has become Canada's number one social concern. While most social developers were very pleased, some were surprised that the Chiefs of Police were 'straying' from their law enforcement realm to the proactive preventive world of social and community development. To some people, the CACP were seen – in a friendly way – as "unusual suspects" in the mission to tackle poverty and other social problems.

The fact that Canada's police leaders are taking a leadership role in social development should come as no surprise. The reality within the policing sector is that police officers know intuitively that unfavourable social conditions such as poor health, lack of education, substandard housing, and ineffective parenting skills can pose serious threats to their mission of making communities safer and healthier.

Historically, social development has very deep roots in the genesis of modern-day policing. On October 3, 1934, Chief Constable D.C. Draper of the Toronto Police Service spoke about the "Social Outlook in Police Service" in an address to the Police Association of Ontario, in what has always been a cornerstone of policing in Canada.

> "Every member of our police forces must constitute himself an agent for the social betterment of his community and the friend and counselor of erring youth. As active workers in the various charitable and social movements, they can divert the stream that is now so steadily flowing in the direction of jail and the penitentiary into the channels of worthy and useful citizenship."

This raises the question of why police these days are considered by many to be "unusual suspects" in the mission for progressive change on this urgent societal problem? Is this perception influenced by the popularized American version of police as law enforcers? Perhaps it is the result of daily news images of police investigating a tragic crime? After all, it is a primary responsibility of the police to enforce our laws and investigation crimes.

But law enforcement responsibilities speak to only one aspect of policing.

Police have always understood that in addition to *reacting* to crime, they also have a primary responsibility to *prevent* crime. Chief Draper's words are as relevant today as they were in 1934. The reality is that day in and day out, Canada's police officers are proactively engaged with social workers, health care professionals, educators, and community volunteers in helping to change and improve the very conditions that are so highly correlated with unsafe and unhealthy communities. In fact, consistent with Chief Draper's message, the current mission statement for the CACP's Crime Prevention Committee reads, "To provide leadership in adopting and promoting a comprehensive, inclusive approach addressing the root causes of crime and social disorder. The Committee supports positive social change to ensure the quality of life for our diverse communities."

Over the last five years, my colleagues within the CACP have truly 'stepped up to the plate' in making social and community development an urgent priority. The CACP is leading progressive change in policing at the national level, and more importantly, at the grassroots community level as well. Our initiatives on

Justice and Literacy (**www.policeabc.ca/**), our work through CACP's Crime Prevention Committee (**www.cacp.ca/default/committees/viewcommittee?committeeId=10**), as well as our work in developing a National Coalition on Safe and Healthy Communities (**www.cacp.ca/index/showcoalitionsgroups?gid=3**) are just a few examples of police acting on the social development front. Yet stories of police leadership on social issues rarely make the news, let alone the front pages of daily papers.

That is why we are thrilled to collaborate with the Canadian Council on Social Development around the Canadian Social Forum. This initiative will give us an important opportunity to celebrate successes in our communities that have been supported by collaborative work of the police and many other caring professionals.

The voice of the CACP *can* help influence progressive public policy that leads to stronger and healthier communities. And adding our voice within the choir of other Canadian voices – all directed towards the same mission of poverty reduction – can have an even more powerful impact on the quality of life for all Canadians.

We are looking forward to becoming active players in the Canadian Social Forum on poverty. We want to share our stories, as well as hear about the leadership efforts of our community partners. And we are confident that our participation in this movement will strengthen the perception that Canada's police leaders are, indeed, "usual" suspects in promoting Canada's social development.

Chief Edgar MacLeod is Executive Director of the Atlantic Police Academy, a division of Holland College on Prince Edward Island (**www.cc.hollandc.pe.ca/atlantic_police_academy/**).
He is also Past President of the Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police (**www.cacp.ca/index/main**).
To find out more about the CACP resolution, go to **www.cacp.ca/media/resolutions/efiles/38/EnglishFinal.pdf**.

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Vocational Rehabilitation Counselling

Beginning: ***September 2009***

The first and only professional Master's program in Canada to address the vocational effects of neurological, physical, sensory, psychiatric, neuropsychological and pain-related disabilities. This multidisciplinary program prepares students for clinical practice in...

- *vocational assessment*
- *individual counselling*
- *job development and placement*
- *return-to-work interventions*
- *disibility management*

For applicants outside of Vancouver:
Arrangements can be made for clinical courses to be done with a qualified supervisor in your location.

UBC's online Master in Vocational Rehabilitation Counselling program is an essential component in addressing nation-wide labour shortages in these leadership positions.

www.eplt.educ.ubc.ca/grad/mvr2.htm

UPDATE: Tracking social development

By Katherine Scott

The task of tracking social development can be difficult in a country as physically large, ethnically diverse, and politically decentralized as Canada. Much of the work of social development – and most of the exciting developments – are taking place at the local or provincial / territorial level.

Many communities, organizations and governments have started to work in new ways with new partners to tackle the challenges of the 21st century. Others are actively seeking new approaches and solutions. But who is telling these stories? Too often, those working in the field are unaware of what's happening in other sectors or regions.

To help bridge this information divide, the Canadian Council on Social Development has developed a new **Social Development Report Series.** The goal of the series is to measure and monitor Canada's progress in specific areas of social development, and help facilitate the exchange of knowledge, the adoption of promising practices and the promotion of innovation across Canada.

The first collection of reports in the series will profile the **poverty reduction policies and programs** in each of the 13 provinces and territories and at the federal level as well (see list of authors below). Each report will identify current federal / provincial / territorial approaches to poverty reduction, discuss the ideas, interests and institutions that have shaped the evolution of policy and programs, and set out critical issues for each jurisdiction moving forward. To complete the series, a 15th report will be prepared, providing an overview of the commonalities and differences across Canada and identifying promising directions for change.

Each of the social development reports will be produced in electronic format and posted on the CCSD's website to ensure greater accessibility by the widest possible audiences. Two-page summaries of each of the reports will also be produced and broadly distributed.

To receive information about this new Social Development Report Series and electronic notification as each provincial-territorial report becomes available, add your name to the CCSD's ***NEWFLASH list****, on the Council's homepage at* **www.ccsd.ca**.

Contributors, Social Development Reports Series (2009)

Newfoundland & Labrador:	Fran Locke, Patti Powers, and Penelope Rowe Community Services Council, St. John's, NL
Prince Edward Island:	Kathleen Flanagan Montague, PEI
Nova Scotia:	Christine Saulnier Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives, Halifax, NS
New Brunswick:	Kurt Peacock University of New Brunswick, Saint John, NB
Québec:	Pierre-Joseph Ulysse l'École de service social, Université de Montréal, Montréal, QC
Ontario:	Glynis Maxwell Community Development Halton, Social Planning Network of Ontario Burlington, ON

Manitoba:	Tom Carter Institute for Urban Studies, University of Winnipeg Winnipeg, MB
Saskatchewan:	Bill Holden Community University Institute for Social Research, Saskatoon, SK
Alberta:	Peter Faid Community Services Consulting Ltd., Edmonton, AB
British Columbia:	Scott Graham, Jill Atkey, Crystal Reeves, and Michael Goldberg Social Planning and Research Council of British Columbia Vancouver, BC
Nunavut:	Jack Hicks Iqaluit, NV
Northwest Territories:	Jeffery Wilson Alternatives North, Yellowknife, NWT
Yukon:	Natalie Edelson Whitehorse, YK
Federal:	David Hay Ottawa, ON
Overview:	Katherine Scott Canadian Council on Social Development

CALL FOR NOMINATIONS for THE WEILER AWARD 2009

The Award:

The Weiler Award is presented annually to acknowledge and honour exceptional contributions to community and social development in Canada.

The Award recognizes outstanding dedication by individuals, groups or organizations to social development and social justice causes through co-operative linkages and collaboration among individuals, groups, agencies and organizations.

The individual, group or organization honoured by this award is involved in social development as a catalyst for co-operation, social inclusiveness and creative response to social needs in both occupational and volunteer endeavours.

The award is named for Dick Weiler (1942-1995). Dick was a social advocate and humanitarian who devoted his life to making the world a better place. He helped lay the groundwork for social policies to promote national and community values in Canada.

Nominating a Candidate:

To nominate a candidate for the 2009 Weiler Award, you are asked to:

- provide a description (in 300 words or less) of the candidate's achievements, the nature and impact of the activities involved, and the audiences reached;
- prepare a one-page biography of the person or a short profile of the organization or group; and,
- obtain three letters of support for the candidate's nomination.

All nomination documents should be forwarded by March 15, 2009 to:
Weiler Award Trust
Attention: Ms. Gweneth Gowanlock
1001- 44 Emmerson Avenue
Ottawa, ON K1Y 2L8
Tel: 613-728-1442
E-mail: **Tweetzero@aol.com**

Continued on next page

PRESENTATION OF THE 2009 WEILER AWARD:

The winning recipient of the 2009 Weiler Award will be honoured at the Canadian Social Forum in Calgary, May 19 to 22, 2009. The Social Forum is being organized and sponsored by the Canadian Council on Social Development.

Winner of the 2008 WEILER AWARD:

Crime Prevention Committee of the Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police

Presentation of the 2008 Weiler Award was made at a dinner in Toronto on May 24th at the Social Work National Conference 2008. The Conference was co-sponsored by the Canadian Association of Social Workers and the Canadian Association of Schools of Social Work, and hosted by the Ontario Association of Social Workers.

The 2008 Weiler Award was presented by David C. Day, Q.C., and Member of the Board of Directors of the Weiler Award Trust, to Chief Edgar McLeod and Dorothy Ahlgren Franklin on behalf of the Crime Prevention Committee of the Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police.

The Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police (CACP) first established its Crime Prevention Committee in 2002, with a mandate to provide leadership in promoting a comprehensive and inclusive approach to addressing the root causes of crime and social disorder. Since that time, the dedicated people on this committee have done well in fulfilling their mandate.

The fact that this Committee is in touch with the wider community beyond the criminal justice system is well illustrated by the fact that it was nominated for the Weiler Award by seven national organizations including the Canadian Council on Social Development, the Canadian Association of Independent Living Centres, the Canadian Nurses Association, YOUCAN, Boys & Girls Clubs of Canada, the Child Welfare League of Canada, and Canadian Pensioners Concerned Inc.

The Committee works closely with social and community organizations to install "prevention" as the solid fourth pillar of criminal justice. To that end, the Committee was the organizing force behind the establishment of the Coalition on Community Safety, Health and Well-being which brings together literacy groups, seniors' organizations, public heath workers, educators, social workers, and those who develop policy and programs within government. The Committee has not only helped bridge the gap between law enforcement and social development, it is also helping connect social development groups on this issue.

The Committee has worked hard to eloquently and powerfully make the case that it is forward thinking, strategic and effective to get tough on the causes of crime. To underline this point, community members have used their positions to argue that "accessible social services which support individuals and families are key to building safe and healthy communities."

The nomination of this committee for the Weiler Award is entirely fitting. Dick Weiler was a founding member of the National Crime Prevention Council in July 1994, and one of his colleagues on the Council was a member of the CACP. Dick was also a very strong proponent of the concept of crime prevention through social development. He spent many years working on social justice and social development policies and programs, which he saw as a way to enable individuals and groups to participate more actively in society. The links between the criminal justice, health, social and education systems were extremely important to him. And these same links are an essential part of the Crime Prevention Committee of the Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police.

Same Sex CPP Survivor's Pensions

NOTICE OF INDIVIDUAL PARTICIPATION REQUIRED
COURT ORDERED DEADLINE

ALL INDIVIDUALS WHOSE SAME SEX PARTNER CONTRIBUTED TO THE CANADA PENSION PLAN AND DIED AFTER APRIL 17, 1985 AND BEFORE JANUARY 1, 1998, ARE NOW ELIGIBLE TO MAKE A CLAIM FOR A CPP SURVIVOR'S PENSION PURSUANT TO THE SUPREME COURT OF CANADA'S RULING IN *HISLOP et al.* v. *CANADA*. THE INDIVIDUALS WHO BENEFIT FROM THIS RULING ARE DESCRIBED IN THIS NOTICE AS CLASS MEMBERS.

FAILURE ON THE PART OF ANY CLASS MEMBER TO TAKE STEPS TO CLAIM THEIR SURVIVOR'S PENSION BY SEPTEMBER 30, 2004, WILL RESULT IN THE CLASS MEMBER NOT BEING ELIGIBLE FOR THE FULL AMOUNT OF ARREARS ALLOWED UNDER THE SUPREME COURT OF CANADA'S JUDGMENT WITHOUT LEAVE OF THE COURT.

IT IS IMPERATIVE THAT EACH CLASS MEMBER ENSURE THAT THEY HAVE MADE AN APPLICATION FOR THEIR SURVIVOR'S PENSION.

The common issues in the class proceeding Hislop et al. v Canada have been finally determined. Class members had been barred by statutory restrictions from claiming a survivor's pension because they were in same sex relationships. The Court's ruling struck down those restrictions under the Charter of Rights. As a result, class members are now entitled to claim a CPP survivor's pension on the same basis as survivors of opposite sex relationships.

What This Means to Class Members

Subject to the general eligibility criteria under the CPP, all Class Members are entitled to claim their Survivors' Pension retrospectively, at least to December 21, 2000, and prospectively through ongoing monthly payments.

How To Make A Claim

Each Class Member must file an application for their Survivor's Pension with the department of Human Resources and Social Development Canada ("HRSDC"). All applications are confidential. To obtain an application from HRSDC directly they can be reached at 1-800-311-3820 (In Canada); 1-613-990-2244 (Outside Canada); 1-800-255-4786 (T.T.Y./Teletypewriter Users Only) or visit their website at **www.servicecanada.gc.ca**.

What if I Already Applied or Made Multiple Applications

If you have already applied and are receiving your pension you do not need to reapply.

If you have recently applied for a survivor's pension and your application has been acknowledged but is still incomplete, you do not need to reapply. You need to provide the missing documents /information HRSDC requested.

If you are experiencing any difficulties with the processing of your application, you may contact class counsel as set out below for assistance.

If you have or had an appeal pending before the CPP Review Tribunal or the Pensions Appeal Board respecting your claim, you should advise HRSDC of the appeal. If you subsequently experience any difficulties with your pension claim, you may consult any lawyer who is representing you in connection with any such appeal or one of the class counsel listed below for assistance.

Am I Entitled to Arrears? (Back Payments)

All Class Members who are qualified for a survivor's pension are entitled to arrears back to December 21, 2000, regardless of whether they have made an application to date. However, if you did make an application for your Pension at any time prior to November 21, 2001, you may be entitled to additional payments back beyond December 21, 2000, but no earlier then August 1999.

It is important to note that regardless of the date of your application, once approved you will be entitled to your pension for the rest of your life.

I Am The Executor of a Same Sex Survivor Who Died Without Collecting A Survivor's Pension. Are the Estates of Same Sex Survivors Entitled to a Survivors Pension?

In the past, Survivors Pensions were not being paid to the surviving partner in same sex relationships. Some survivors died prior to the Supreme Court of Canada ruling without receiving their pension.

An Individual same sex survivor who was alive on October 2, 2003, but who subsequently died may still have their claim made by their executor.

There are some class members who survived their same sex partners but died prior to October 2, 2003. The Supreme Court has ruled that such class members are not entitled to have a claim made by their executor.

Normal CPP Rules Apply

Not all Canadians are entitled to a Survivor's Pension. There are rules that apply equally to opposite sex and same sex relationships that must be followed in order to obtain a Survivor's Pension. Some of the important rules are as follows:

(1) the survivor, at the time of their partners death, must have been the legal spouse or common law partner of the deceased contributor;

(2) the deceased contributor must have contributed for the minimum contributory period; and

(3) the survivor must have been over the age of thirty five at the time of their partners death or disabled.

Legal Fees

The amount of fees payable to Class Counsel by any individual class member will not exceed the amount of money payable to such individual.

There will be no deduction from your current monthly pension for legal fees. Class Counsel will only be looking to arrears (back payments) for the payment for their fees. You may use your monthly Pension payments to meet your needs as you see fit without any concern about legal fees.

The legal fees will be paid from three sources subject to court approval. First, the government was required to pay a contribution to the costs in respect of the trial and the appeal in this proceeding. This amount has been paid. However, the amount paid was not enough to pay the full legal fees owing by the class to class counsel as approved by the Court. Second, the Supreme Court confirmed that interest is payable on the amounts awarded in this proceeding. Once the interest rate is fixed by the court, the amount available will be used to reduce the amount of money owed by class members to class counsel. It currently appears that the amount that may be paid as interest will not be sufficient to fully reduce the fees owing to Class Counsel. The third potential source is the back payments or arrears. The Court will be asked to rule on the question of whether the balance of legal fees owed to class counsel can be deducted from up to 50 per cent of the arrears payable to class members under the ruling, as requested by class counsel. This payment from the arrears will not be made unless ordered by the Court. Once the court rules on this issue Class Members will be notified of the amount of arrears that they will be receiving and how their share of arrears will be paid. In no case will the legal fees payable by any class member exceed the amount they will receive for arrears or back payments.

Future legal fees will also be subject to court approval.

If you have any questions about this proceeding please contact Class Counsel in your area:

In Ontario, Quebec, Northwest Territories, Yukon or Nunavut:
Roy Elliott Kim O'Connor LLP
Attn: Sean M. Grayson
200 Front Street West
P.O. Box #45
Toronto, ON M5V 3K2
T. (416) 362-1989
F. (416) 362-6204
Toll Free: 1(866) 877-0109
e-mail: cpp@reko.ca
website www.reko.ca

In Prince Edward Island, Nova Scotia, Newfoundland & Labrador and New Brunswick
McInnis Cooper
Attn: Jennifer Biernaskie
George Street Office
1600-5151 George Street
P.O. Box 730
Halifax, NS B3J 2V1
T. (902) 425-6500
F. (902) 425-6350

In Saskatchewan and Alberta:
Selnes, Kapoor & Klimm
Attn: Bill Selnes
417 Main Street
Box 2200
Melfort, SK S0E 1A0
T. (306) 752-5777
F. (306) 752-2712

In Manitoba:
Chapman Goddard Kagan
Attn: Michael Law
1864 Portage Avenue
Winnipeg, MB R3J 0H2
T. (204) 831-3106
F. (204) 832-3461

In British Columbia:
Camp Fiorante Matthews
Attn: Sharon Matthews
4th Floor, Randall Building
555 West Georgia Street,
Vancouver, BC V6B 1Z6
T. (604) 689-7555
F. (604) 689-7554

Please DO NOT CALL the registrar of the court or Justice Ellen M. Macdonald. They will not be able to answer your questions about the lawsuit.

The Canadian Council on Social Development invites you to the inaugural Canadian Social Forum, May 19-22, 2009 in Calgary.

canadian social forum

We're bringing together a dynamic combination of unusual suspects from social development, public health, the environment, community safety and recreation to brainstorm about poverty reduction in Canada.

The Forum will be the place to witness, experience and be part of the profound changes that occur when we all move beyond our comfort zones and work together on a common issue.
(See page 14 of this issue of *Perception* for more information about plans for the Canadian Social Forum.)

Be part of it. Join us in Calgary next May.

Registration for the Canadian Social Forum entitles you to attend all Forum sessions and receive all conference materials. The registration fee also includes the Opening Reception on Tuesday evening, as well as complimentary breakfasts, lunches and refreshment breaks during the Forum.

And all registered participants at the Forum will receive a **complimentary one-year membership** in the CCSD.

Registrations will be accepted until May 11th, 2009. They will not be accepted on-site during the Forum.

Payment:
Registration fees may be paid by credit card (VISA, MasterCard or American Express) or by cheque (made payable to "CCSD"). To be eligible for the early bird registration rate, payment must be received no later than January 31st, 2009.

Register online at **www.ccsd.ca/csf/2009/index.htm.**

Bursary Information:

The CCSD has endeavoured to keep registration fees for the Canadian Social Forum as low as possible. However we realize that costs may be a barrier for some groups and individuals.

The Council has approached a number of funders to help us create a bursary program. So far, we have been successful in earmarking $15,000 from the Agnes Benidickson Fund to facilitate youth participation in the Forum. Information on applying for bursaries from this fund will be available soon.

The CCSD is also encouraging larger organizations or funders to explore creative ways of sponsoring and assisting the participation of individuals or groups at the Canadian Social Forum. We are hopeful that our fundraising work for a broader bursary program will result in some good news in the near future.

If you want to be kept up-to-date on possible subsidies, please send an e-mail with your name and contact information to **membership@ccsd.ca** and indicate "Forum subsidy program" in the subject line of your e-mail.